

## CLAIMS

1. A processing unit for an electronic instrument comprising:

5 a signal/data processor;

an exposed external electrical contact for receiving electric power input;

an exposed external electrical contact for receiving an electric signal input;

10 an exposed external electrical contact for transmitting an electrical signal output; and

a housing comprising mechanical retention features for securely attaching a battery/input/output module.

15 2. The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said processing unit comprises a memory.

3. The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said processing unit comprises a keypad.

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4. The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said processing unit comprises a microprocessor.

5. The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein the contacts may be sealed through the attachment of a cover to the surface of said housing.

5        6. The processing unit of Claim 1, wherein said processing unit comprises a display.

7. The processing unit of Claim 6, wherein said display is a touch panel display.

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8. A battery/input/output module for an electronic instrument comprising:

a storage device for electric energy;

15        an exposed external electrical contact for transmitting electric power;

an exposed external electrical contact for receiving an electric signal input;

an exposed external electrical contact for transmitting an electrical signal output;

20        a housing comprising mechanical retention features for securely attaching a processing unit.

9. The battery/input/output module of Claim 8, wherein the contacts may be sealed through the attachment of a cover to the surface of said housing.

5        10. The battery/input/output module of Claim 8, further comprising a serial port electrically coupled to said exposed electrical contact for transmitting an electrical signal output.

10       11. The battery/input/output module of Claim 8, further comprising a parallel port electrically coupled to said exposed electrical contact for transmitting an electrical signal output.

15       12. The battery/input/output module of Claim 8, further comprising a wireless transceiver for data communications electrically coupled to said exposed electrical contact for transmitting an electrical signal output.

20       13. The battery/input/output module of Claim 8, further comprising an embedded inductive charger for said energy storage device.

14. The battery/input/output module of Claim 8, further comprising a power input port for charging said energy storage device.

5        15. A portable electronic instrument comprising a processing unit coupled to a battery/input/output module.

16. The portable electronic instrument of Claim 15, wherein said portable electronic instrument is sealed.

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17. The portable electronic instrument of Claim 15, wherein said portable electronic instrument may be powered by coupling an external power source to said battery/input/output module.

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18. The portable electronic instrument of Claim 17, wherein said external power source may be inductively coupled to said battery/input/output module.

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19. The portable electronic instrument of Claim 15, wherein said portable electronic instrument is a handheld computer.

20. The portable electronic instrument of Claim 15,  
wherein said portable electronic instrument comprises a  
global positioning system (GPS).